Depot Town Rag

Volume 22, Number 4

June 2007

Rollin' on the River

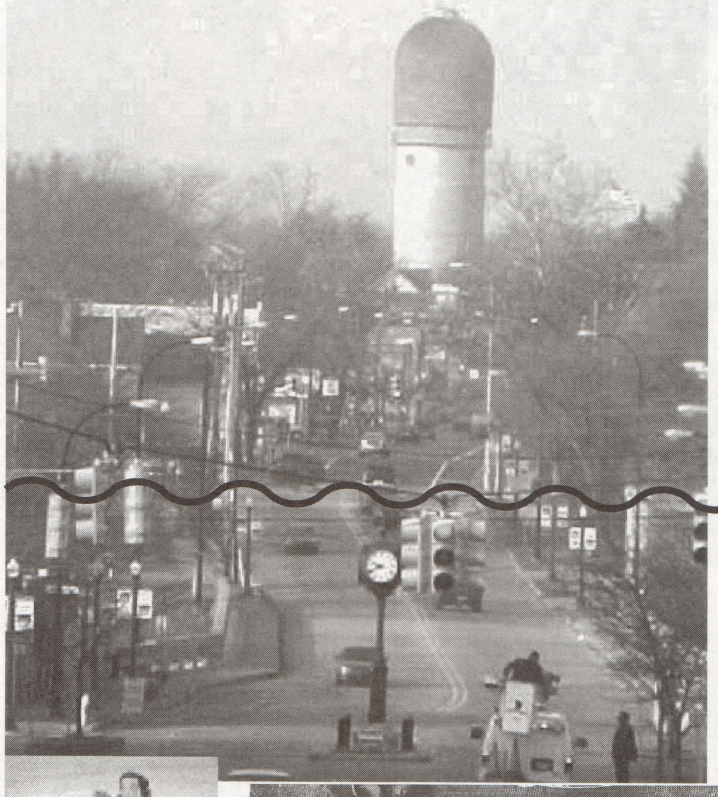
100% FREE *RAG* CONTENT

A PUBLICATION OF THE DEPOT TOWN ASSOCIATION, INC. The Old Caboose, 400 Market Place, Ypsilanti, Michigan 48198

The Huron River through recent history

- **Post glacial** - Native American river transportation meets the Great Sauk Trail at a popular meeting ground (Riverside Park)
- **1680** - French explorer Robert Cavelier Sieur de LaSalle fights black flies and downed trees in a downstream "cruise" from Dexter to Belleville, crosses by land to *de troit* (the straight), heads back to Montreal and later to Paris, France
- **1809** - Godfroy's On the Pattowatomie trading post at site of today's DTE/Riverside Arts Center
- **1823** - New York settlers arrive via Erie Canal and Lake Erie to pole upstream to establish Woodruff's Grove
- **1824** - Ypsilanti founded, 53 mills follow between Ypsi and Ann Arbor. Mill owners build mansions along North Huron and River Streets
- **1838** - Michigan Central Line follows river bank through Ypsilanti on the way to The Great West
- **1900** - River seen as efficient dumping place; nobody cares about those downstream folks. "Let 'em eat carp-cake," they say.
- **1930** - Henry Ford builds a dam here, names the resulting backwater for himself
- **1956** - Huron River Watershed Council forms to influence decisions made by various local agencies
- **1970** - Preservationists begin to value natural—and built—environments. City parks developed along the riverside
- **1974** -Ypsilanti Community Utilities Authority (YCUA) formed

Depot Town: A river runs through it



Park your car. Get out and stroll the banks of the Huron River in Ypsilanti. Walk along the berm that created Frog Island. Cross the "Tridge" to Riverside Park. Cross the Huron again and continue to Ford Lake.

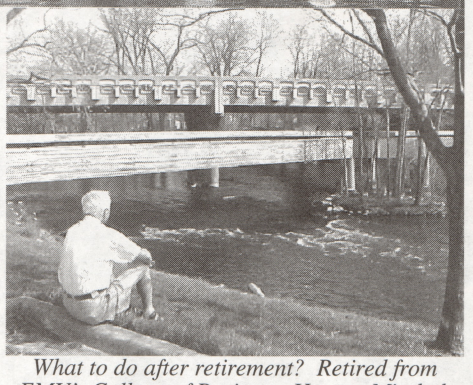
Paddle a canoe to Lake Erie and, if you're able, ride the current clear to the Atlantic Ocean.

Folks from the New Belgium Brewery in Fort Collins, Colorado made their sentiment obvious in a campaign to stop the damming of the Poudre River

Why is water use always such a dry debate?

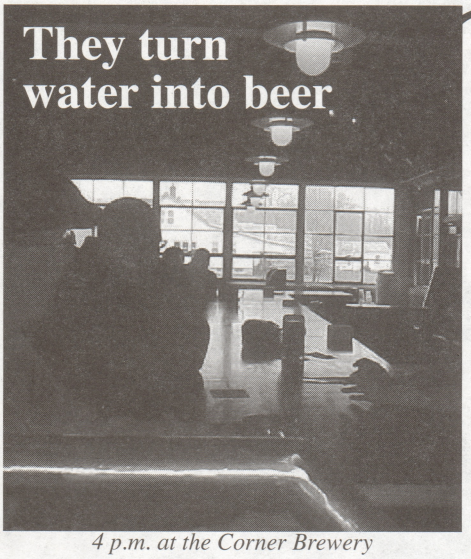
Not very many years ago—before we had an epiphany about our natural resources—we must have figured the Huron River was a moving dump, constantly recyling itself and magically getting rid of stuff we didn't want to keep around any more. Then Belleville and Flat Rock complained; apparently they didn't want our old grass clippings or automobile oil sent to them. And we started talking to Ann Arbor about the same issues.

That was then; this is now. Much of that has changed. Today we know better. Check out the Huron River at the Cross Street Bridge in Depot Town. Celebrate the Huron River all year round—but especially on July 15.



What to do after retirement? Retired from EMU's College of Business, Hassan Mirshah contemplates the bridges from Riverside Park.

They turn water into beer



4 p.m. at the Corner Brewery

Ypsi's water has just the right pH balance to make great beer. So says brewer Stacey Roth, who started out at Williamston's Michigan Brewery Company, then brewed at Ann Arbor's Grizzly Peak, and is now part of the brewing team at the Corner Brewery.

"Beer is 95% water," she says, "so it's important that we have the right kind of water—about a "5"—closer to acidic than alkali on the 14-point pH scale."

Harder water makes for better flavor, with calcium, salts, gypsum, and calcium chloride already in the water that naturally comes from our taps here. "The right kind of water is most efficient in utilizing the grain," she says. "It gets the sugar out."

"The rest of the beer's flavor depends on the hops," says Roth, and the Corner Brewery has a wide range of tastes/flavors in the beer they make right on the corner of Forest Avenue and Norris Street.

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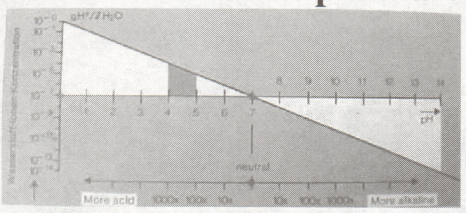
Beer or ink? Same pH chart



The best water for making beer or printing newsletters shows a pH factor between 4.5 and 5 [acid:alkali]

Who knew? Might we have learned the Periodic Table of Scientific Elements more easily if we had known that beer and printing were so closely related?

Wine vs. water; watch what you drink

In a number of carefully controlled trials, scientists have demonstrated that if we drink 1 liter of water each day, at the end of the year we would have absorbed more than 1 kilo of *Escherichia coli* (E. Coli) bacteria found in feces. In other words, we are consuming 1 kilo of poop.

However, we do not run that risk when drinking wine (or rum, whiskey, beer or other liquor) because alcohol has to go through a purification process of boiling, filtering and/or fermenting.

Remember: water = poop, wine = health, Therefore, it's better to drink wine and talk stupid, than to drink water and be full of poop.

There's no need to thank the editors for this valuable information; it is offered as a public service.

Everybody's talking about the water...

"Say anything that you like about me except that I drink water."

-W. C. Fields, LIFE magazine, 1947

"All the water that will ever be is, right now." *-National Geographic, 1993*

"There are two good reasons I won't drink reconstituted toilet water: Number One and Number Two!"

-Comedian Richard Brenner, 2007

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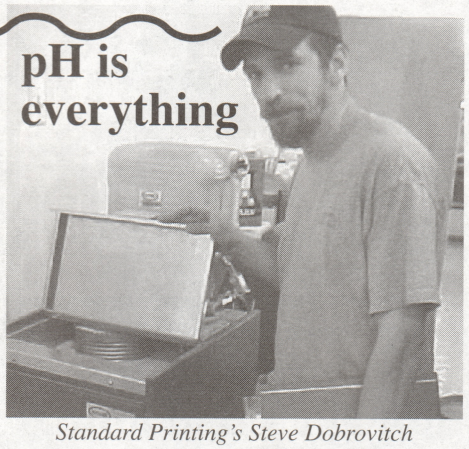
pH is everything



Standard Printing's Steve Dobrovitch

Ypsi's water works well in the presses at Standard Printing. "I have to monitor the pH level to keep the inks between 4.5 and 5 on the pH scale," says master printer Steve Dobrovitch, "otherwise it goes all over the plate and creates drying problems."

Water hardness—the amount of calcium in the water—in printing shops shows that problems can arise with the offset process once water hardness is more than about "15 °dH = 2.5 mmol/l." Apparently Dobrovitch and the Germans who made his presses understand the concept perfectly.

Did you sign the petition?

Hundreds of "activists" at a recent concert signed petitions to "ban Dihydrogen Monoxide from public water systems." Thinking themselves to be environmentalists, they proved only to be "joiners," said magicians Penn & Teller in their pod cast of the hoax.

Dihydrogen Monoxide is water.

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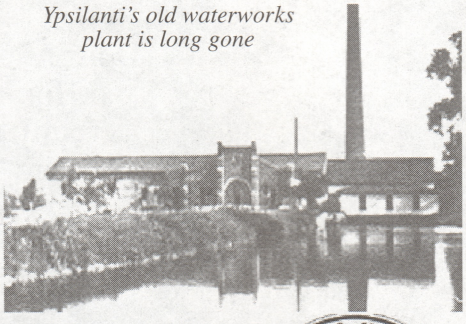


Ypsilanti's old waterworks plant is long gone

We love the Huron River, but we don't drink the stuff

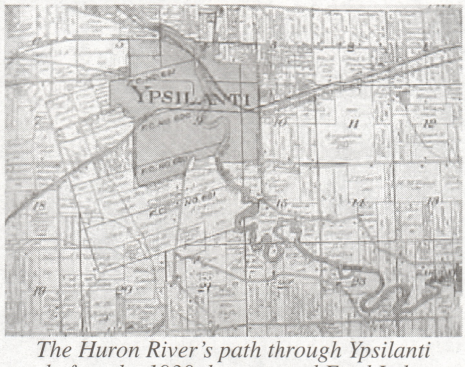
The Ypsilanti Community Utilities Authority (YCUA) began providing water and wastewater services to the Ypsilanti area in 1974. Water and/or wastewater services are provided to the City of Ypsilanti, Charter Township of Ypsilanti, Pittsfield Township, Augusta Township, Sumpter Township and Superior Township. YCUA contracts with the Western Townships Utilities Authority (WTUA) to provide wastewater treatment services for the Townships of Canton, Northville, and Plymouth.

YCUA processes over eight billion gallons of wastewater annually at their plant located at McGregor and State Streets near Willow Run Airport. YCUA delivers five billion gallons of water each year. In the City of Ypsilanti and Ypsilanti Township, YCUA delivers direct services to every home and business (approximately 18,000). In the other communities, YCUA contracts to provide bulk water and wastewater services.

"Huron" was second choice for a name

This was not always called the Huron River. The first white-man-name for this body of water was the Clinton/Erie River, in contrast to the Clinton/St.Clair River that ran to a different Great Lake. At that time everybody seemed to be naming things for DeWitt Clinton; he's the most named-after in America of anyone who was not a U.S. President even though he never came to the Michigan Territory.

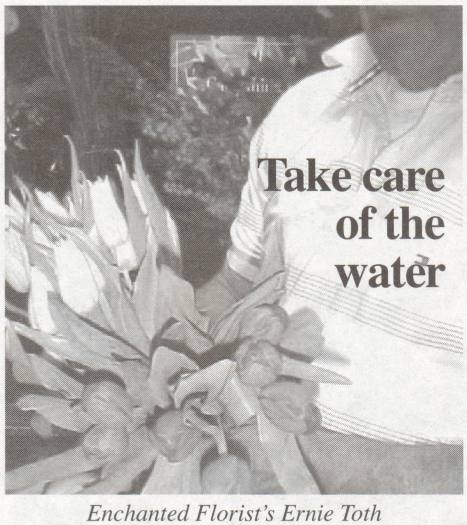
Apparently it all got too confusing, and the Clinton/Erie name was dropped in favor of the name of the long-conquered Native Americans.



The Huron River's path through Ypsilanti before the 1930 dam created Ford Lake

Although the Native American Hurons were wiped out by the Ottawas in 1648-49, their name remains on the land. In addition to the Huron River and Huron Street, there are 38 telephone book listings for "Huron-something-or-others," 43 listings of "Huron Valley" promotions, and eight listings for "Huron River-enterprises."

THE FINE PRINT: Even though Eastern Michigan University dropped the Huron name as their athletic teams' mascot, the ancient Native American tribe is still in evidence in such commercial enterprises in one or more of the following categories:
Ambulances, Apartments, Appraisal Companies, Art Supplies, Boys & Girls Club, Cameras, Catholic School, Churches, Cleaners, Collision experts, Concrete & Masonry, Consultation Center, Counseling, Credit Unions, Deli Markets, Electrical companies, Energy Company, Farms, Financial, Food sales, Gastroenterologists, Girl Scouts of America, Glass Company, Golf Club, Graphics, Hand Surgery, Heating & Air Conditioning, Hospitals, Intergroup of AA, Lawn Service, Log Homes, Machine Products, Medical billing specialists, Memory Loss, Net Works, Night Hawks Motorcycle Club, Nursery School, Opthamologists, Parks, Party stores, Pet Suppliers, Physical therapy & Aquatics, Physicians, Podiatrists, Printing & Imaging, Printing Presses, Property Management, Radiology, Railroad Historical Society, Realty, Reporting Service, Restaurant Equipment, Roofing, SCUBA Gear, Services for Youth, Soaring, Swim Club, Telecommunications, Tennis Club, Travel agencies, Visiting Nurses, and Window Cleaning



Enchanted Florist's Ernie Toth

"Take care of the water and your cut flowers will last longer, " says Ernie Toth, manager and floral designer at Enchanted Florist. "Add this little packet of plant food to your water and then don't let the stems turn brown," Toth notes. Re-cut the stem at a 45° angle every other day and replenish the water, too. The Enchanted Florist gives out extra packets of the magic plant food on request.

Watch for details of a Friends of the Ypsilanti Freighthouse "Friend-Raiser" in the July *Rag*.

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You can order "whisky and water," "scotch and water," or any number of drinks with soda water, but Tara Petrone will still bring a glass of fresh water to your table at the Sidetrack.

How much of that stuff should we drink?

To ward off dehydration and make sure your body has the fluids it needs, make water your beverage of choice, say experts at the Mayo Clinic. Nearly every healthy adult can consider the following:

- Drink a glass of water with each meal and between each meal.
- Hydrate before, during and after exercise.
- Substitute sparkling water for alcoholic drinks at social gatherings.
- If you drink water from a bottle, clean or replace the bottle often. Refill only bottles that are designed for reuse.

Though uncommon, it is possible to drink too much water. When your kidneys are unable to excrete the excess water, the electrolyte (mineral) content of the blood is diluted, resulting in a condition called hyponatremia (low sodium levels in the blood). Endurance athletes—such as marathon runners—who drink large amounts of water are at higher risk of hyponatremia. In general, though, drinking too much water is rare in healthy adults who consume an average American diet

Help keep pollution out of the River:

Sweep it: Do you have extra fertilizer, grass clippings, or dirt on your driveway or sidewalk? Sweep it back onto your lawn on planter box. Hosing your sidewalk or driveway sends these pollutants into the River.

Keep it clean: Whether in the street or in your yard, remember to keep leaves, grass clippings, trash, and fertilizers away from storm drains.

Only rain in the drain: Never dump motor oil, chemicals, pet waste, dirty or soapy water, or anything else down the storm drain. Once down the storm drain, all of these materials pollute our lakes and rivers.

Label it: Volunteer to label storm drains in your neighborhood to inform residents that they flow directly to our lakes and stream. Encourage friends and neighbors to contact their local community for more information on storm drain stenciling programs.

Find out more at www.semcog.org

Lack of State funds changes district's crosswalk plans

Kathie Garrett, DTA's commemorative brick campaign chair, regrets to announce a change in this summer's brick installation. "Due to the lack of grant money from the State of Michigan," Garrett announced in early May, "personalized bricks will not be used to create new crosswalks on Cross Street. Instead, they will be placed on the sidewalks along with the existing personalized bricks." DTA is hoping to install bricks already purchased in the fall of 2007.

To stay informed on this program, please check the Website at http://depottown.org/campaign.htm to keep up to date.

In the next *Rag*:

Elvis returns to the block as we review other famous and notorious folks who have stopped in over the years; cheesy tabloid-style material.

Buffalo Bill Cody

Depot Town Rag

"All the news that fits, we print"
A monthly publication of
the Depot Town Association, Inc.
P.O. Box 970235
Ypsilanti, Michigan 48197
To the editor:
thomasdodd@comcast.net

The Depot Town Association, Inc.

Gary McKeever, President
Mary Decker, Vice President
Ray Strassel, Treasurer
Sandee French, Scy. & Past President
Website: www.depottown.org
DTA meets at 6:30 p.m on the third Wednesday of each month at Café Luwak, 42 East Cross Street.

DTA's old caboose in rehab

The Association has set aside $7500 for improvements to its caboose/office in the Market Plaza. David Wheeler is researching the color and the Historic District Commission might more easily approve any improvement over its faded *pink* condition. Radford Roof Repair of Saline will replace the roof with copper. Radford has experience in historic properties, having just finished the pre-Civil War Sutherland/Wilson barn in Pittsfield. The former Grand Trunk Western caboose arrived here in 1980.

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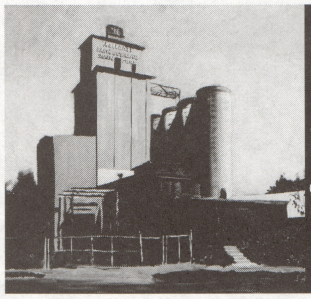
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Ypsilanti Food Co-op's Corrine Sikorski

There's a high content of *irony* in our drinking water

"We have the best water in the world with the turn of a faucet at the sink," notes Corrine Sikorski of the Ypsilanti Food Co-op. "A lot of the rest of the world does not have that."

The Co-op carries big bottles of water for coolers and dispensers, but Sikorski decries the tiny bottled water craze. "There's no deposit or refund on them," she says, "so those plastic bottles just add pollution."

Sales of bottled water are booming around the globe, and in some countries sales are increasing annually by up to 10 per cent. According to the World Wildlife Fund, it's the fastest-growing beverage sector in the world.

U.S. sales of bottled water jumped from 17,336.8 millon litres in 1999 to 25,766.1 million in 2004, a compound annual growth rate of 8.2%.

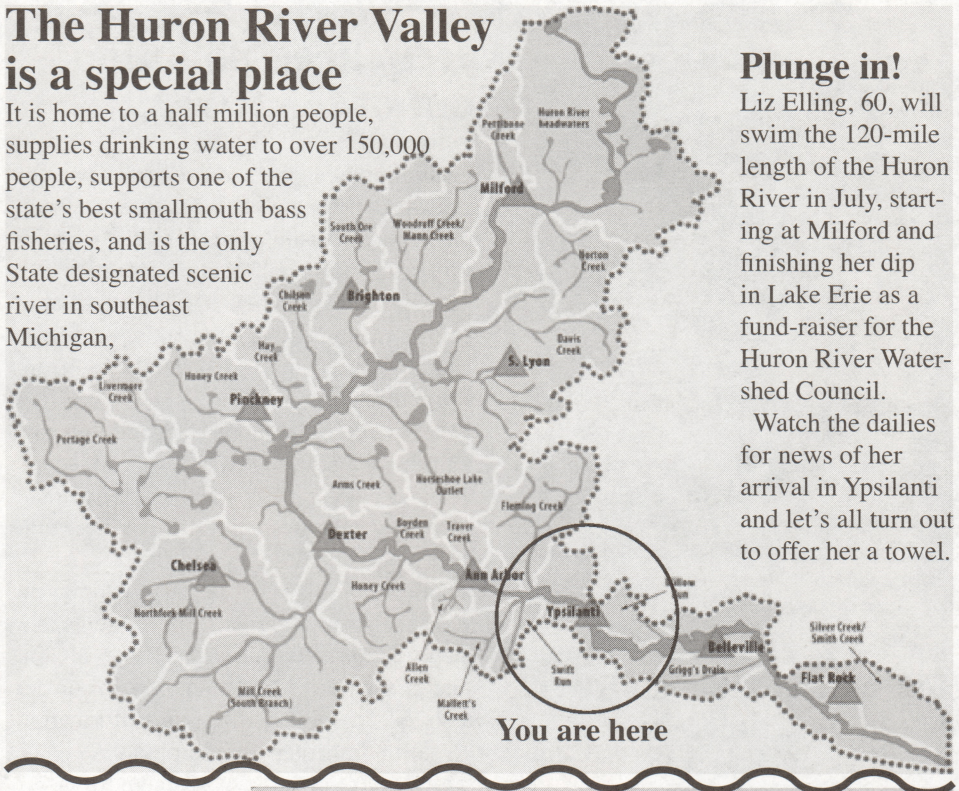
The popular bottled water "Evian," spelled backwards, is "naive."

Seven simple steps to cleaner water

1. Help keep pollution out of storm drains
2. Fertilize sparingly and caringly
3. Carefully store and dispose of household cleaners, chemicals, and oil
4. Clean up after your pet
5. Practice good car care
6. Choose earth-friendly landscaping
7. Save water

The Huron River Valley is a special place

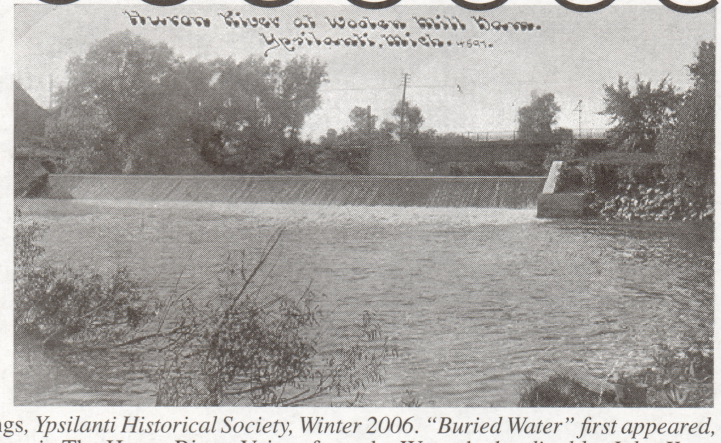
It is home to a half million people, supplies drinking water to over 150,000 people, supports one of the state's best smallmouth bass fisheries, and is the only State designated scenic river in southeast Michigan,



Plunge in!

Liz Elling, 60, will swim the 120-mile length of the Huron River in July, starting at Milford and finishing her dip in Lake Erie as a fund-raiser for the Huron River Watershed Council.

Watch the dailies for news of her arrival in Ypsilanti and let's all turn out to offer her a towel.



Huron River at the Woolen Mill Dam, Forest Avenue Bridge in background [C. 19th century]

Buried Water

by Eastern Michigan University professor Janet Kauffman

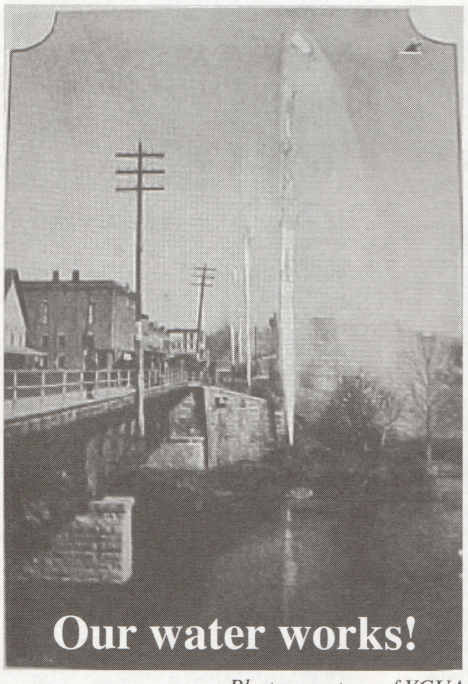
From Ypsilanti Gleanings, *Ypsilanti Historical Society, Winter 2006. "Buried Water" first appeared, in a slightly different form, in* The Huron River; Voices from the Watershed, *edited by John Knott and Keith Taylor (University of Michigan Press, 2000). Excerpts reprinted here with permission of the author.*

…Water starts out simple, very clear. But as soon as it hits the ground we claim, things get murky. And you know how much we claim: every square inch.

Look at some square inches and acres around here. Ypsilanti, for instance. A narrow, funnel-down point in the Huron River Watershed, Ypsilanti has been claimed ground since the French Claim of 1809. On early maps—1825, 1974—the Huron River takes a sprawling turn at Ypsi, with marshes on both sides of the wide floodplain. A small stream flows into the river near Forest Avenue. A bit later, in 1907, on the delicate, hand-colored survey maps drawn up by Gardner S. Williams, they're still there, the marshes, the stream…

…Around EMU, the river takes that wide, formerly swampy, turn after Leforge Road, swings around to the Forest Avenue Bridge and then runs more or less straight into Depot Town and through Riverside Park. The Huron River isn't buried, it isn't completely barriered, but most students at EMU don't notice the Huron River and don't think of it as part of campus. They know the river as part of the scenery in Depot Town, east of school, where Frog Island and Riverside Parks open up the water to view.

In Depot Town you can walk on a scaffolded wooden walkway that connects the parks and crosses over the river, under the Cross Street Bridge. It's the one place in town you can meander, get close to the churn of the water, hear it wash around the rocks there, and check out whatever debris has snagged in the brush and slung off to one side—a couple of tree stumps, clutches of cans in branches, a tire, some fishing lines.



Our water works!

Photo courtesy of YCUA
The First Annual Report (1890) of the Board of Water Commissioners of the City of Ypsilanti showed Depot Town's four fire hydrants proving the pressure of the stand pipe at the top of the hill (water tower).

1 p.m. Sunday 15, July

Huron River Day

North Hydro Park Grand Opening

Celebrate Huron River Day with the official opening of North Hydro Park, nestled along the north shore of the Huron River just east of the Ford Lake Dam (2599 Bridge Road). Recent developments in this scenic 46-acre park include the addition of ADA accessible fishing and canoe docks, interpretive paved trails along the river, wetlands, prairie and woods, pavilion, restrooms, improved parking and entrance road, gate house, picnic tables and benches.

More info: www.riversidekayak.com

Ypsilanti Food Co-Op and the River Street Bakery

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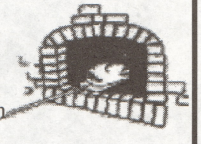

Fresh Bread in the tradition of hearth baked artisan breads available Monday Wednesday and Friday evenings

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RAGTIME Coming events

Right here in River City

8 a.m. - 2 p.m., Saturdays
Farmers' Market
behind the Freighthouse

3 June
Orphan Car Show

7 June – 13 September
Depot Town Cruise Nights

Wednesday 20 June
Summer British Knights
British-only cruise night

7 p.m.-Midnight, Friday, 22 June
Moonlight Madness
Fun! Food! Friends! Live Music!
Antiques•Unique Gift • Clothing & Jewelry
Home Furnishings • Art & Photography
Discover the Depot Town Experience!

23-24 June
Community Relay For Life
Riverside Park

29, 30 June, 1 July
Camaro Superfest 2007

13-14 July
Michigan Elvisfest
Sanctioned by Graceland

27, 28 July
Summer Beer Festival

11-17 August
United Association of Plumbers & Pipefitters

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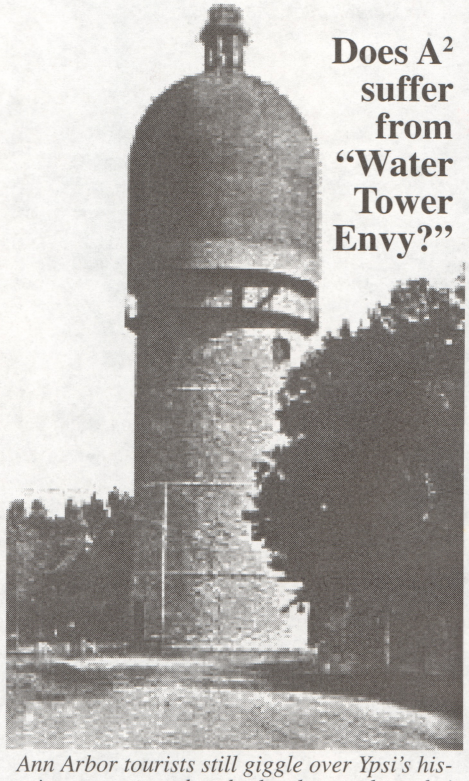

Does A² suffer from "Water Tower Envy?"

Ann Arbor tourists still giggle over Ypsi's historic water tower, but do they know where their own water comes from? How we doin', Ypsi?

Ypsilanti's water no longer comes from the Huron River, but Ann Arbor's does and their treated sewage goes right back into it. A simple test can be conducted in your own home as you compare and contrast the color, smell, and taste of water from the Huron River (Ann Arbor) to water from the Great Lakes (YCUA customers, including Ypsi). You decide.

It ALL drains to the Huron River!

Help keep pollution out of storm drains. There are no storm drains in Depot Town; being so close to the surface of the water in the Huron River, road builders decided to shape East Cross Street curbs and gutters to drain directly into the River! Down here, it is even more obvious that everything IN THE STREET drains to the River. Walk down hill for a block and watch where the gutter dips just before the Cross Street Bridge. There's no theory here; it's all real.

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